The presently claimed invention is directed to a belt for a continuously variable transmission.

Applicants respectfully note that Sekine et al. disclose a "metallic V belt 10 [that] comprises an endless or loop-like belt strap 15 composed of a plurality of ... thin metallic layers or webs each having a flat-plate-like transverse cross-section, a number of metallic blocks 20 slidably mounted successively on the belt strap 15, and a pair of retaining belt straps 30 ... which holds the belt strap 15 on the metallic blocks 20 from being detached" (column 3, lines 17-26).

Applicants note that the present invention can be used with a pair of metal ring assembles 31. In contrast, Sekine et al. is only directed to a single corresponding belt strap 15. Thus, in order to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended claim 1 to further define this aspect of the invention and to even more clearly distinguish Sekine et al.

Regarding present claim 2, which has been amended to be independent, Applicants respectfully note that the present specification states that when the peripheral length of an inner surface of each of the retainers is set larger than that of an outer-surface of each of the outermost metal rings, a clearance is defined between each of the retainers and each of the outermost metal rings.

Sekine et al. does not teach or suggest such a clearance.

Thus, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims 1 and 2 would not have been obvious over Sekine et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) are respectfully requested.